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RUSK PLEDGES VIET ACTION

Lodge Protests Attack on Americans

BY MICHAEL PAKENHAM
(Chicago Tribune Press Service)

Washington, Oct. 5—Secretary of State Dean Rusk said today that firm steps will be taken by American officials in response to the beating of three American newsmen in Saigon by South Vietnamese secret police.

The three were Grant Wolfkill and John Sharkey of the National Broadcasting company and David Halberstam of the New York Times.

"Ambassador Lodge has protested to the government of Viet Nam in the most serious terms the physical assault of American newsmen in Saigon," Rusk's statement said.

Pressed by U. S.

"The treatment of news correspondents is a matter the United States has pressed with the authorities of Viet Nam for many months. Unfortunately, repeated assurances given to American officials by those authorities have not prevented this recent incident. The matter is being pressed further."

A state department official said United States Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge had delivered the protest to the secre-

tary general of the South Viet Nam foreign office.

Lodge was unable to see the acting foreign minister, the spokesman said.

The three men were attacked by plainclothes police after witnessing the suicide by burning of a Buddhist monk protesting the alleged anti-Buddhist policies of the regime of President Ngo Dinh Diem.

The state department said American embassy personnel are keeping in close touch with the three injured men.

Ripped by Executive

In New York City, William R. McAndrew, executive vice president in charge of NBC news, released this statement:

"This was the climax of several months of harassment of American newsmen, including threats, absurd censorship—now physical beatings. We are now asking the state department not to be content with lodging a simple protest but to demand that those responsible for this senseless brutality be brought to trial—as would happen in any civilized country."

Sen. Mike Mansfield, [Mont.] Senate majority leader, unleashed a strong statement holding the Viet Nam government responsible for the attack.

"The news that three correspondents representing the American press have been manhandled and beaten in Saigon is shocking," Mansfield said.

Not Given Aid

"It is even more shocking that they were refused any assistance after the deplorable incident occurred. It would be my opinion that the United States government should view this incident with the gravest concern."

"These men were in Viet Nam legally, and it is my understanding that they were carrying out a legitimate function of their profession."

"The Vietnamese government is fully responsible for their safety. It would seem to me that they are entitled not only to an apology from that government, but for such just compensation as may be indicated by the damage they suffered," Mansfield said.

Other members of Congress expressed concern.

Hope for Progress

Observers in the state department said today that the United States may be in a better position to crack down on the harsh tactics of the Diem regime because of the removal

of the top central intelligence agency official in Viet Nam.

It was generally agreed by officials here that John H. Richardson, first secretary of the American embassy and special assistant to Lodge, will not return to Saigon as CIA chief after coming to Washington soon for consultation.

Many state department officials, who have been feuding with the CIA over conflict in policies and tactics in Viet Nam, were elated by Richardson's removal.

He had been regarded as perhaps the closest American to Ngo Dinh Nhu, brother of President Diem, and among other things, head of the secret

police who beat the newsmen. Richardson's job of masterminding the touchy and complex guerrilla operations in the war against the Communist Viet Cong had put him in the position of having to work with Nhu.

Lodge requested Richardson's removal, and has asked for a replacement.

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